

City of Alexandria, Virginia
Park and Recreation Commission

REGULAR MEETING
Thursday, January 17, 2013, 7:00 p.m.
Charles Houston Recreation Center
901 Wythe St., Alexandria, Virginia

Summary Minutes

Members Present: Chairperson Judy Guse-Noritake, Bob Moir, Vice Chair, Gina Baum, Richard Brune, Judith Coleman, William Cromley, Ripley Forbes, Brian McPherson, Emma Schutzius, Nick Wagner. **Excused Absence:** Stephen Beggs.

RPCA Staff: Director James Spengler, James Nichols, Division Chief, Park Operations, William Chesley, Deputy Director Recreation Services, Jack Browand, Division Chief Marketing, Special Events and Waterfront Operations, Ron Kagawa, Division Chief Park Planning, Design and Capital Development, Laura Durham, Open Space Coordinator, Robin DeShields, Executive Assistant.

Absent: Dinesh Tiwari, Deputy Director, Park Operations.

Guests: William Skrabak, Deputy Director, Transportation and Environmental Services (T&ES), Environmental Quality, Amy Friedlander, Urban Planner, Planning and Zoning.

I. Call to Order by Chair, Judy Guse-Noritake: The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m.

II. Planning and Zoning Updates-Beauregard Rezoning and North Potomac Yard Plans, Amy Friedlander, Urban Planner: To view copies of the presentations go to <http://alexandriava.gov/uploadedFiles/recreation/info/PRCBeauregardUpdateJ17jan2013.pdf>

- A. Beauregard Rezoning:** Amy Friedlander gave update. The SAP was approved in June 2012. Staff is now writing the rezoning conditions that will need approval by the Planning Commission and City Council-goal for completion by spring of 2013. **See Review-Approval Process:** The Small Area Plan (SAP) – Establishes the broad, long-term vision for development to occur in the Beauregard area over the next 20 to 30 years; CDD/Rezoning– Establishes requirements for all items not addressed as part of the Design Guidelines, including developer contributions, affordable housing, phasing of infrastructure, land use, parking, etc.; Design Guidelines and Standards – Establish how the new construction (buildings, streets, open space, etc.) should look and interact; and the Development Special Use Permit (DSUP)-Ensures that zoning conditions, such as affordable housing are implemented. Process will involve the community and associated Boards and Commissions. Each DSUP requires approval by the Planning Commission and City Council. **The Chair** said since the design guidelines are where many of the open space park elements will be decided, Planning & Zoning needs to come back to the PRC prior to Developer decision for an extensive discussion of the public open space

requirements. A concern was expressed that during the design phase for Potomac Yards, the PRC requested active small recreational uses. The intent was that this would be revisited and defined, however staff changed and the City got locked into what was in the document. Having flexibility to review guidelines at the time of redevelopment is important as the Beauregard Plan will take many years for completion, the demographics in the City will change. The Chair wants to ensure there is the ability to define uses at that time-staff needs to be careful about the wording and have a precise discussion about this. Friedlander- said the Design Guidelines are mostly illustrative and not binding. Durham- said the guidelines are more typology based and not as proscriptive as the Potomac Yard Guidelines, and that she can review the open space portion of the guidelines with the PRC. The Chair would like a narrative included in the plan which states that at the time of design guidelines when certain requirements are triggered staff will have the ability to review any program requirements and make any changes at that time. Durham said programming happens with the DSUP process. Friedlander reviewed- Approval Process and governing documents for Beauregard Area. She said there is phasing of built environment and funding to pay for certain amenities. There are three types of open space: 1. public open space, dedicated and maintained by the City, 2. public open space, privately owned and maintained, and 3. private open space, privately owned and maintained. The Chair said that category 1, public open space owned and maintained by the City needs to come before the PRC from early programming and design. She would appreciate notice regarding Category 2- public open space, privately owned and maintained, as this occurs, however this is up to the developer and HOA. There are practical aspects associated with open space such as satisfying the recreational needs of the community, not just creating drive-by open space. Friedlander- said this will be part of the public DSUP process. Other amenities include a multi-purpose field located next to William Ramsay Elementary School, bike and pedestrian trails, 40% tree canopy, public arts requirements, and additional developer contributions towards active recreation in or near the plan area. Durham said amenities are in line as development occurs, and the multi-purpose fields are 10-15 years out, depending on when JBG redevelopment occurs. The Director said there was some discussion of the additional public open space at Dora Kelley Park, and whether this would stay private or contain a conservation easement. Durham- said site is currently privately owned, but the SAP calls for area to be redeveloped with property adjacent to Dora Kelley to be dedicated to the City. This discussion should be taken up with the Beauregard Advisory Group; real estate tax benefits of maintaining private ownership are negligible. The Chair said there is a lot of open space in the plan area; some concerns are the proposed traffic circle/ellipse takes up about two acres, are unusable, and should therefore not be counted as open space. Also not shown, is a large regional storm water detention pond that is being counted as open space. Durham- this is currently not engineered-just a placeholder 1 to 1.5 acres. The Chair this is large enough for a field. That Chair said the Department of T&ES, is responsible for managing and meeting the City's requirements for storm water detention ponds in the community. Although these are needed, she would prefer to not define these as usable open space. There were no additional comments or questions.

- B. Presentation-North Potomac Yards**- P&Z came to the PRC a few months ago. The Special Use Permit (SUP) for the Terminal Facility expired in March 2011. Originally the Planning Commission wanted the facility to be relocated and placed underground. The SAP was just approved and they knew area was to be redeveloped. The Planning Commission deferred it for 15 years. Dominion Power now says they can move the

facility to their own substation in Arlington County, and they would remove three pylons which would help enhance the Alexandria/Arlington gateway. Staff is currently working with Arlington County, Dominion Power and WMATA on this project, and reviewing new location for buses. This may go to the Planning Commission in the spring. The Chair said this is a positive project; she will write a letter of support, once the project is approved by P&Z. There were no questions or comments.

- III. Block 19 – Carlyle Development.** This item is an update to the Commission. The project will be brought to the Commission at a later date, likely in March, 2013. Paradigm Development Company (Paradigm) is currently undertaking the plan approval process (currently in concept stage) for Block 19 in Eisenhower East. Paradigm's proposal includes a residential building, underground garage, and landscape associated with the building. The proposal also includes development of a storm water management pond (BMP) in the area of Block 19 formerly designated as the Community Park. The Community Park was approved as a Parks/Resource Protection Area open space through the Eisenhower East Small Area Plan (see attachment). The stormwater management pond appears to be a departure from the Eisenhower East Small Area Plan and will require an amendment to the Small Area Plan as a part of the project Development Special Use Permit.

The Commonwealth of Virginia established stringent new regulations in regards to managing storm water runoff. These regulations are aimed at improving the quality of streams, rivers, and ultimately the Chesapeake Bay into which these streams and rivers flow. These regulations require the public and private development sectors of Virginia's Chesapeake Bay's watershed to plan, design and implement various Capital investments and to change operational procedures in order to improve storm water related water quality.

William Skrabak-Deputy Director T&ES, attended meeting and gave a brief update on the City's storm water management program and answered questions from the Commission. He may return to the PRC at a later time to provide further updates. The Chair thanked him for attending.

- IV. Approval of Summary Minutes from November 15, 2012.** The Park and Recreation Commission did not meet in December; therefore this item was taken up in January. The Chair asked if there were any additions/deletions; there were none. Brune motioned to approve; Baum seconded. All were in favor, the minutes were approved.

- V. Division Updates: To View Full Staff Reports - Go to**
<http://alexandriava.gov/uploadedFiles/recreation/info/PRCBeauregardUpdateJ17jan2013.pdf>

A. Recreation Programs and Service Update –See Staff Report: William Chesley said that the newly introduced fees for the Out of School Time Program (OSTP) are working well. The Titan Lounge after-school drop-in program was discontinued this year, due to resource constraints of Alexandria Schools. The City's Gang Task force spoke in support of re-establishing the Titan Lounge Program next school year. Follow-up on temporary closing of Chinquapin Recreation Center for maintenance May-September: The Center originally opened in 1985 and some items have exceeded their life expectancy. Repairs will include a new HVAC system, upgrades to front entrance doors, and locker room

reconfiguration. Staff is planning to relocate programs to other recreation centers and school sites. ACPS has approved relocation of summer camps to Frances Hammond Middle School. Notice has been sent out to parents. Outdoor pools hours have been expanded. In addition, staff is researching the possibility of using other places and has calls into a few places including Episcopal H.S. The only concern is temporarily relocating senior programs, which requires that the water temperature be warm. David Ghezzi, staff Architect said that the new HVAC system will help reduce humidity; this will help increase the comfort of participants. The Chair suggested providing a tour of the facility in April to a few local newspapers, and let them do an article to help inform the community on actions being taken to support this temporary relocation of programs.

B. Park Operations Report – Dinesh Tiwari, Deputy Director was absent. See Staff Report. The Director introduced James Nichols, new Division Chief of Park Operations. Mr. Nichols is one of three Division Chiefs recently hired to support Park Operations. There were no questions or comments.

C. Marketing, Special Events and Waterfront Operations – See Staff Report. Jack Browand reported that a Virginia Legislative Senate Bill was introduced that will provide municipalities with the ability to prohibit smoking in public parks; the final decision however rests with each local municipality. RPCA has already installed signs to help discourage smoking in the City's public parks and at special events.

D. Park Planning Reports – Ron Kagawa and Division Team- See Staff Reports-Active Park Projects including CIP Projects and Active Capital Facilities Maintenance Projects (CFMP Report).

VI. Director's Report - James Spengler- See Staff Report

A. FY14 - Operating Budget Update: City Council will approve the FY14 budget at its 1st legislative meeting in May. Revenues are growing at 2% per year; expenditures at 5% per year, reductions are needed. All City Departments have been given budget reduction targets. RPCA has reduced its budget by \$895,000.

B. FY14-FY23 Capital Improvement Program: City Council requested staff to look at any deficits in recreational facilities. Funding was previously loaded for completion of the Aquatics Study. The study included an option to replace the pool at Chinquapin Center pool with a new 25 x 25 meter competitive size pool. Following a recent meeting with the Aquatics Group (Advocates for Alexandria Aquatics), the language was amended to read "up to a 50 meter pool".

VII. Report from Commissioners (verbal updates):

A. Waterfront Commission - Gina Baum – Meeting #1- a lengthy discussion about improvements needed to the dog park at Founders Park. Durham said the Dog Park Master Plan identifies it as an off-leash exercise area. Chair-the PRC testified during the Waterfront Plan process that as the Waterfront Plan is completed this dog exercise area needs to be relocated. Commissioner Baum "Given the recent Large Park studies, we need to revisit the dog park master plans for instance and in particular those along the waterfront that will be affected by the Union St. Corridor improvements and the Waterfront Small Area Plan, and to relocate those in high traffic areas that may cause safety issues for people, traffic, cars, bikes, and dogs, etc.

such as at Founders Park. With the upcoming plans to improve the Montgomery St. Park, now is a good time to improve that dog area and make it a more prominent feature for the community and a higher priority.” The Director RPCA said that the Dog Park Master Plan will be revisited in the future. As part of the Waterfront Plan, the City is doing a Park Plan for the entire waterfront. A design team will be hired and input will be requested from the PRC. Planning is also being done for Montgomery Park located at 901 N Royal St. Durham said funding will come from the Harris Teeter Development for these improvements; any upgrades of park would have to be discussed with the community as there are other uses are planned, in addition staff would need to look at the timing of the Harris Teeter development. Baum- Meeting #2- the Waterfront Commission discussed the letter on Wales Alley. The Waterfront Commission got hung up by taking the position that Wales Alley was public land; they decided not to vote for the PRC letter as presented. Stuart Dunn proposed that the Waterfront Commission write their own letter stating that if this parcel of land is found to belong to the City then the Alley should be opened up. The Chair said both the PRC and WFC letters were sent to the old and new City Council members.

- B. **Youth Sport Committee** - Bob Moir. Moir said the Committee met last Monday, and discussed the Greenplay Resource Allocation Cost Recovery Project. Advocates for Alexandria Aquatics, Bill Rivers, gave a report on upgrading the City Aquatics facilities. Witter Field will open at the end of January, a dedication ceremony will be held in the spring. Simpson Field to get new lights. Hammond scheduled in spring-ribbon cutting held. Fence still pending. Neighbors like the new track. Basketball registration - has increased from last year. Discussion: Baum expressed concern with placement of groups by skills levels; this sometimes places 9, and 10 year olds with 12 year olds. Inconsistency by school and Recreation Centers. Skill levels need to be tracked or keep all age levels together. Chesley- said enrollment has grown at certain locations, numbers are so great- usually more kids than you can put on one team-process discussed with coach. Sports program is basic skills and fun based. Children developing their skills are typically placed in the national division. 1—teams involved in program he is not aware of problems. A number of jurisdictions use the same process. As end of season approaches staff will poll parents and coaches on how it is working, and consider modifying policy based on what the Alexandria community and coaches’ think is the best approach for organizing recreation level basketball teams. Other- Ms. Baum expressed concern that the age cutoff date had been changed this year and that she knows one parent who did not enroll her child in the program because of the change in the age cutoff date. Chesley stated that the age cutoff date had not been changed to his knowledge. The Chair suggested Baum and Chesley meet later to discuss these items.

Baum- The deadline for baseball cut off was moved up to March 31 it was April 30, this is right in the middle of the school year. Should follow school system cutoff date.

- C. **Four Mile Run** - Ripley Forbes- no report
- D. **Freedmen’s Cemetery** - Bob Moir- no meeting. In response to a question from Baum, Director Jim Spengler said the artwork for this project was approved.

- E. **ACPS & Capital Improvements**- Judy Guse-Noritake: The City put together a group. Chair Noritake, who is part of this group, reported that the second meeting was held. The group is looking at projected school enrollment and its possible impacts on recreation programs. New Director of Facilities said ACPS is taking a close look at Patrick Henry and may have some alternatives to a full reconstruction. Kagawa said ACPS is working collaboratively.
 - F. **Community Gardens Policy**- Judy Guse-Noritake: She and Laura Durham, Open Space Coordinator, are discussing the community gardens policy. Forbes has stated an interested in working on this project.
 - G. **Ft. Ward - Ripley Forbes, Bob Moir**: Forbes reported that there are new Interpretative signs at Ft. Ward Park depicting African American History. Moir said five responses received on the RFP for a Park Management Plan. Staff (OHA/RPCA/TES) will reduce down to three. Hoping to award contract by next month.
 - H. **ACPS School Projects**- Judy Guse-Noritake-no update.
 - I. **Jefferson Houston School** - William Cromley- said the project is moving along.
 - J. **Beauregard Corridor Plan Task Force** - Stephen Beggs (absent). The Chair said that she attended the last meeting discussed west part of the plan. Durham said Advisory Group is discussing guidelines on Saturday January 26th.
 - K. **Open Space** - Judy Guse-Noritake- the Chair and Laura Durham are looking at arranging a meeting of the Open Space Group.
 - L. **Braddock Plan Park**- Judy Guse-Noritake: Laura Durham, Open Space Coordinator reported that there will be an open house followed by another meeting. Cromley said he and the Chair are interested in promoting an urban park concept. Less passive use and more urban park uses.
- VIII.** At the close of the meeting, the Commission will take comments on any other topic from the public. None were received.
- IX.** **Agenda items for February 21, meeting and location.** The Chair noted that she will be out of town in February. Tentative agenda items include the field's allocation report, tour of Potomac Yard and election of officers. The Chair noted that the terms of Commissioners Forbes, Cromley and McPherson are expiring soon. All desire to reapply for another term. Action: A motion was made by Brune to write letter supporting all three reappointments; and seconded by Baum. All were in favor. The Chair will draft the necessary letters for term renewals to the City Clerk. The location of the February meeting will be Patrick Henry.
- X.** **List of upcoming public meetings.** A list was distributed at the meeting.

Meeting Adjourned: 9:00 p.m.